

## About the Refuge

St. Marks NWR, located along the Gulf Coast of Florida, is a well-known oasis of natural Florida habitats for wildlife, especially birds. Natural salt marshes, fresh-water swamps, pine forests and lakes provide a haven for wildlife and people.

Fishing, hiking, bird watching, butterfly-watching, hunting, and viewing the historic St. Marks lighthouse on beautiful Apalachee Bay attract visitors from around the world. Special events highlighting the refuge's coastal resources, monarch butterflies, wildflowers and migratory birds enhance visitors' opportunities to learn more about this special place.

Established in 1931 for wintering migratory birds, St. Marks NWR has a long tradition of excellent bird-watching. There are over 300 species of birds recorded on the refuge, with 98 species nesting on-site. There are 19 species of ducks and many hawks, falcons, and shorebirds migrating through the refuge in the fall and winter. There are at least 14 active bald eagle nests and the endangered least tern and red-cockaded woodpecker also nest on the refuge.

In the spring, the refuge is a showcase of colors as songbirds migrate north through coastal oaks and shrubs. Wildlife abounds on St. Marks NWR due to the wide diversity of habitats, ranging from wilderness saltmarshes, ribboned with tidal creeks, to rolling longleaf pine forests, with swamps, sink-holes, and palm/oak hammocks in between. Located in Wakulla, Jefferson, and Taylor counties, the refuge covers over 70,000 acres and spans over 43 miles of coastline and supports 52 species of mammals such as the Florida black bear and bobcat; 40 species of amphibians such as the endangered frosted flatwoods salamander, and 65 species of reptiles.

## Getting There

St. Marks NWR is located 25 miles south of Tallahassee, Florida. Take State Hwy. 363 through Woodville to the intersection of State Hwy. 363 and State Hwy. 267 (traffic light at this intersection). Turn left onto 267 and drive 4 miles to dead end into U.S. Hwy. 98 (Coastal Hwy). Turn left onto Coastal Hwy. and drive about 1/2 mile, cross over the St. Marks River, and take your first right on Co. Rd. 59 (Lighthouse Rd.).

The Visitor Center and Nature's Classroom are three miles down Lighthouse Rd. A 6.8-mile wildlife drive runs from the Visitor Center to the old historic St. Marks lighthouse on Apalachee Bay.



Sponsored by  
USFWS and St. Marks  
Refuge Association



## Reservations and Questions

For more information contact  
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## Book Your Environmental Education Programs at

St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge

## Nature's CLASSROOM



## About Our Programs

**FREE** for groups that have educational curriculum requirements that can be met by our outdoor classrooms. Programs are designed to accommodate **up to 50 students**. Students will be divided into smaller groups so they can get the most from their experiences at St. Marks NWR.

Each program may include a game, lesson and hands-on activity. Programs are correlated to the Next Generation Sunshine State Standards.

Unless otherwise noted schools are expected to provide one adult chaperone for each 10 students attending. Chaperones will actively participate in the presentation of the programs under the supervision of the Refuge educational staff.

Programs denoted with \* can be taken off site to your school. However, field components may not apply.

**Special Programs-** Groups with unique requirements or requests will be accommodated based on the availability of refuge facilitators. If a teacher needs a program that is not listed we will do our best to provide an appropriate program to meet their needs.

### What to Bring on a Field Trip



All programs maximize outdoor activities so students should dress appropriately for the weather and are required to wear closed toed shoes. The following items are recommended:

- Comfortable closed toe walking shoes
- Drinking water
- Insect repellent
- Camera
- Sun screen

### \*Adaptable Animals

**Grades K-3**

**All year**

Learn how animals are adapted to survive – teeth, claws, camouflage, eyes, etc.

### Butterfly Encounter

**Grades K-4**

**Fall**

Experience the Butterfly Lifecycle Game, watch a photo packed presentation and look at actual Butterfly bio-facts in our classroom.

### Coastal Explorer

**Grades 4-6**

**Sept-Oct 18, Mar –May**

Explore Apalachee Bay and its coastline and marshes. Students use nets, seines and binoculars. (SAFETY NOTE: closed toed shoes are required.

### \*Digital Photography

**Grades 4-12**

**All year**

Come learn the basics of digital nature photography! Take a walk and take photos on the refuge. Teacher should supply flash drive.

### Earth Scientist

**Grades 4-6**

**All year**

Students measure temperature, wind and humidity using scientific instruments to learn about and compare various habitats on the refuge. For this program, schools should provide one adult for each 5-7 students.

### Freshwater Ecosystems

**Grades 4-6**

**All year**

Explore freshwater ecosystems on the refuge. Students will use thermometers, nets, ID sheets, etc. Wading will not take place during winter months.

### \*Insect Safari

**Grades K-3**

**Spring and Fall**

Go on an insect scavenger hunt and learn about various insects.

### Lighthouse History

**Grade 4**

**All Year**

Tour the lighthouse keepers quarters and learn about the history of our lighthouse.

### Programs for All Grades –All Year

### \*Endangered Species

Students will be introduced to various endangered species found on the refuge and what they can do to help protect those species. A field experience will accompany this program.

### \*Feathered Friends

Students will learn what makes birds unique – characteristics, adaptations, and behavior. Binoculars will be used to identify birds in the field when possible.

### \*Magnificent Mammals

Students will learn what makes mammals unique – characteristics, adaptations, and behavior. Students will be introduced to specific species of mammals that can be found on the refuge. Field exercise will follow.

### \*Reptiles and Amphibians

Students will learn what makes reptiles and amphibians unique – characteristics, adaptations, and behavior. Field exercise will follow.

### Living with Fire

Learn about prescribed burning, and how to use some of the instruments used in planning a prescribed burn.